AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the

application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for

~~determining~~ estimating a [[the]] popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

a query analysis process for analyzing a query of the text-based object to determine a

plurality of links to Internet objects relating to [[said]] the query, wherein the plurality of links

comprises connections between the text-based object and the Internet objects;

a link weighting process for determining [[the]] an individual link strength of each of

[[said]] the plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

a link strength summing process for determining [[the]] a sum of [[said]] the plurality of

link strengths, wherein [[said]] the sum corresponds to the popularity of [[said]] the text-based

object.

2. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of

claim 1 wherein [[said]] the link weighting process includes a click analysis process for

determining a link use statistic for each of [[said]] the plurality of links, wherein the link use

statistic of each [[said link]] of the plurality of links affects [[the]] a strength of [[that]] each

corresponding link.

3. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of

claim 2 wherein [[said]] the link use statistic [[is]] comprises an integer specifying [[the]] a

number of times that [[that]] each corresponding link was used prior to [[said]] the query

analysis process analyzing [[said]] the query.

4. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of

claim 1 wherein [[said]] the link weighting process includes a content analysis process for

analyzing [[the]] a relevancy between each of [[said]] the plurality of Internet objects and [[said]]

the query, wherein [[the]] a relevancy value corresponding to the relevancy of each [[said]]

Internet object affects [[the]] a strength of the link to [[that]] each corresponding Internet object.

5. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of

claim 1 wherein [[said]] the link weighting process includes a link structure analysis process for

analyzing [[the]] a quality of each of [[said]] the plurality of Internet objects, wherein [[the]] a

quality value corresponding to the quality of each [[said]] Internet object affects [[the]] a strength

of the link to [[that]] each corresponding Internet object.

6. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of

claim 5 wherein [[said]] the link structure analysis process includes an incoming link analysis

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process for determining [[the]] a number of objects linked to each of [[said]] the plurality of

Internet objects, wherein [[the]] an incoming link value of each [[said]] Internet object is directly

proportional to the number of objects linked to [[that]] each corresponding Internet object,

wherein [[said]] the incoming link value affects [[said]] the quality value of [[that]] each

corresponding Internet object.

7. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of

claim 5 wherein [[said]] the link structure analysis process includes an outgoing link analysis

process for determining [[the]] a number of objects that each of [[said]] the plurality of Internet

objects is linked to, wherein [[the]] an outgoing link value of each [[said]] Internet object is

directly proportional to the number of objects that [[said]] the Internet object is linked to,

wherein [[said]] the outgoing link value affects [[said]] the quality value of [[that]] each

corresponding Internet object.

8. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of

claim 1 wherein each [[said]] link strength [[is]] comprises a relevancy score.

9. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of

claim 8 wherein [[said]] the relevancy score [[is]] comprises a percentage.

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10. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 1 wherein said query is a text-based query and includes at least a portion of [[the]] text of said text-based object.

11. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 10 wherein [[said]] the text-based object [[is]] comprises a query.

12. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 10 wherein [[said]] the text-based object [[is]] comprises a document.

13. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 1 wherein [[said]] the plurality of links [[is]] comprises a user-definable number of links and [[said]] the popularity predicting process further comprises a link limitation process for defining [[said]] the user-definable number of links.

14. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 1 further comprising an object conversion process for converting said text-based object into said query.

15-20. (Cancelled)

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21. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method for ~~determining~~ estimating a [[the]] popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

analyzing a query of the text-based object to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to [[said]] the query, wherein the plurality of links comprises connections between the text-based object and the Internet objects;

determining [[the]] an individual link strength of each of the plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

determining the sum of the plurality of link strengths, wherein this sum corresponds to the popularity of the text-based object.

22. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method for ~~determining~~ estimating the popularity of a text-based object of claim 21 wherein determining the individual link strength includes determining a link use statistic for each of the plurality of links, wherein the link use statistic of each link affects [[the]] a strength of that link.

23. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method for ~~determining~~ estimating the popularity of a text-based object of claim 21 wherein determining the individual link strength includes analyzing [[the]] a relevancy between each of the plurality of Internet objects and the query, wherein [[the]] a relevancy value corresponding to the relevance of each Internet object affects [[the]] a strength of the link to [[that]] each corresponding Internet object.

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24. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method for ~~determining~~ <u>estimating</u> the popularity of a text-based object of claim 21 wherein determining the individual link strength includes analyzing [[the]] <u>a</u> quality of each of the plurality of Internet objects, wherein [[the]] <u>a</u> quality value <u>corresponding to the quality</u> of each Internet object affects [[the]] <u>a</u> strength of the link to [[that]] <u>each corresponding</u> Internet object.

25. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method for ~~determining~~ <u>estimating</u> the popularity of a text-based object of claim 24 wherein analyzing the quality of each of the plurality of Internet objects includes determining [[the]] <u>a</u> number of objects linked to each of the plurality of Internet objects to determine an incoming link value for each Internet object, wherein the incoming link value of each Internet object is directly proportional to [[the]] <u>a</u> number of objects linked to [[that]] <u>each corresponding</u> Internet object, wherein [[this]] <u>each corresponding</u> incoming link value affects the quality value of [[that]] <u>each corresponding</u> Internet object.

26. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method for ~~determining~~ <u>estimating</u> the popularity of a text-based object of claim 24 wherein analyzing the quality of each of the plurality of Internet objects includes determining [[the]] <u>a</u> number of objects that each of the plurality of Internet objects is linked to, thus determining an outgoing link value for each Internet object, wherein the outgoing link value of each Internet object is directly proportional to [[the]] <u>a</u> number of objects that [[that]] <u>each corresponding</u> Internet object is linked to, wherein [[this]] <u>each corresponding</u> outgoing link value affects the quality value of [[that]] <u>each corresponding</u> Internet object.

27. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method for ~~determining~~ estimating the popularity of a text-based object of claim 21 wherein the query [[is]] comprises a text-based query and the method for determining the popularity of a text-based object further comprises incorporating at least a portion of [[the]] text of one of the [[text-based]] Internet [[object]] objects in the query.

28. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented method for ~~determining~~ estimating the popularity of a text-based object of claim 21 wherein the plurality of links [[is]] comprises a user-definable number of links and the method for determining the popularity of a text-based object further comprises defining [[the]] a user-definable number of links.

29. (Currently Amended) An [[Apparatus]] apparatus for estimating a popularity of a text-based object ~~inferring~~, the apparatus comprising digital circuitry configured to perform the following actions:

analyze a query of the text-based object to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to the query, wherein the plurality of links comprises connections between the text-based object and the Internet objects;

determine [[the]] an individual link strength of each of the plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

determine [[the]] a sum of the plurality of link strengths, wherein [[this]] the sum corresponds to the popularity of the text-based object.

30-32. (Canceled)

33. (Currently Amended) A <u>system comprising at least one</u> processor and memory <u>for estimating a popularity of a text-based object, the at least one processor executing instructions from the memory</u> [[configured]] to:

analyze a query <u>of the text-based object</u> to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to the query<u>, wherein the plurality of links comprises connections between the text-based object and the Internet objects</u>;

determine [[the]] <u>an</u> individual link strength of each of the plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths; and

determine [[the]] <u>a</u> sum of the plurality of link strengths, wherein [[this]] <u>the</u> sum corresponds to the popularity of the text-based object.

34. (Currently Amended) The [[processor and memory]] <u>system</u> of claim 33 wherein [[said]] <u>the at least one</u> processor and memory are incorporated into a personal computer.

35. (Currently Amended) The [[processor and memory]] <u>system</u> of claim 33 wherein [[said]] <u>the at least one</u> processor and memory are incorporated into a network server.

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36. (Currently Amended) The [[processor and memory]] <u>system</u> of claim 33 wherein [[said]] <u>the at least one</u> processor and memory are incorporated into a single board computer.

37. (Cancelled)

38. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for ~~determining~~ <u>estimating a</u> [[the]] popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

an object conversion process for converting [[said]] <u>the</u> text-based object into a query;

a query analysis process for analyzing [[said]] <u>the</u> query to determine a plurality of links to Internet objects relating to [[said]] <u>the query, wherein the plurality of links comprises connections between the text-based object and the Internet objects</u>; and

a link weighting process for determining [[the]] <u>an</u> individual link strength of each of [[said]] <u>the</u> plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths.

39. (Currently Amended) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of claim 38 further comprising a link strength summing process for determining [[the]] <u>a</u> sum of said plurality of link strengths, wherein [[said]] <u>the</u> sum corresponds to the popularity of [[said]] <u>the</u> text-based object.

40. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for ~~determining~~ <u>estimating a</u> [[the]] popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

a search engine for analyzing a query <u>of the text-based object</u> to determine a plurality of

links to Internet objects relating to [[said]] <u>the</u> query<u>, wherein the plurality of links comprises</u>

<u>connections between the text-based object and the Internet objects</u>; and for determining [[the]] <u>an</u>

individual link strength of each of [[said]] <u>the</u> plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of

link strengths; and

a link strength summing process for determining [[the]] <u>a</u> sum of [[said]] <u>the</u> plurality of

link strengths, wherein [[said]] <u>the</u> sum corresponds to the popularity of [[said]] <u>the</u> text-based

object.

41. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of

claim 40 wherein said search engine comprises:

a query analysis process for determining said plurality of links to Internet objects relating

to said query; and

a link weighting process for determining said plurality of link strengths.

42. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for

~~determining~~ <u>estimating a</u> [[the]] the popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

an object conversion process for converting [[said]] <u>the</u> text-based object into a query;

a search engine for analyzing [[said]] <u>the</u> query to determine a plurality of links to

Internet objects relating to [[said]] <u>the</u> query<u>, wherein the plurality of links comprises</u>

<u>connections between the text-based object and the Internet objects</u>; and for determining [[the]] <u>an</u>

individual link strength of each of said plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link

strengths; and

a link strength summing process for determining [[the]] a sum of [[said]] the plurality of

link strengths, wherein [[said]] the sum corresponds to the popularity of [[said]] the text-based

object.

43. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of

claim 42 wherein said search engine comprises:

a query analysis process for determining said plurality of links to Internet objects relating

to said query; and

a link weighting process for determining said plurality of link strengths.

44. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented popularity predicting process for

determining estimating a [[the]] popularity of a text-based object, comprising:

an object conversion process for converting [[said]] the text-based object into a query;

and

a search engine for analyzing [[said]] the query to determine a plurality of links to

Internet objects relating to [[said]] the query wherein the plurality of links comprises connections

between the text-based object and the Internet objects; and for determining [[the]] an individual

link strength of each of [[said]] the plurality of links, thus generating a plurality of link strengths.

45. (Previously Presented) The computer-implemented popularity predicting process of

claim 44 wherein said search engine comprises:

a query analysis process for determining said plurality of links to Internet objects relating

to said query; and

a link weighting process for determining said plurality of link strengths.